

Pioneers of a New Frontier



a novel
by Amirreza Mahdian

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Brewing Horizons

Thorald stood tall at the helm of his sturdy ship, his hair whipped back by the relentless wind that surged across the icy waters. The frigid air stung his cheeks, ruddying them with a rosy flush, but he paid it no mind, his focus was fixed solely on the boundless horizon that stretched out before him, as vast and mysterious as the dreams that drove him forward.

The ship beneath his feet creaked and groaned, its ancient wooden frame protesting the strain of a journey. It was a vessel forged by generations of skilled ship builders, a masterpiece of craftsmanship and resilience. Thorald traced his fingers along the weathered wood, feeling the rough texture beneath his touch. Each groove and imperfection told a story, a testament to the trials and triumphs of their people.

Behind him, huddled together on the deck, the tribe awaited his command. Faces adorned with a fur-lined hood peered out from beneath heavy cloaks, half-hidden by the swirling mist that rose from the swirling sea.

Their eyes, bright with anticipation and tinged with a hint of apprehension, spoke volumes of the weight they carried on their shoulders. They had placed their trust in Thorald, their leader, their beacon of hope in the vast expanse of uncharted waters.

The ship rocked gently as waves cascaded beneath it. A rhythmic lullaby that whispered of both danger and adventure, Thorald's gaze bore into horizon, scanning the distance with keen-intensity, they were about to embark on a voyage unlike any other, leaving behind the familiarity of their homeland in search of a place they could call their own- a sanctuary where they could build a future free from the shackles of scarcity and hardship.

For too long, their people had weathered the relentless storms of their homeland. Every day was an unyielding battle against the elements. Now, the time had come to venture beyond their familiar yet dangerous shores and seek the elusive promise of a new beginning.

With determination etched upon his face and a fire burning in his heart, Thorald raised his hand, signaling his crew to set sail. The ship responded obediently, propelling them on a journey that would shape their destiny.

Echoes of Departure

Memories of their homeland surged through Thorald's mind like a torrential rivers of Svalrfold, carrying with them the emotions and experiences that shaped their lives. Svalrfold, their ancestral home, painted a vivid picture in his thoughts.

It was a land that had both sustained and challenged them. The bitter winters, with their relentless snow storms and biting frost, had forged bonds as strong as the frozen ground of Svalrfold. Together they had fought against elements, their days filled with struggles to secure sustenance in a world where resources were scars and unforgiving.

But amidst the hardships, they had built a tight-knit community, a tribe forged by unity and unwavering resilience. They had learned to harness the power of toughness, relying on the collective wisdom and strength of their people to endure the harshest of circumstances. In times of abundance, they celebrated with joy and feasts and in times of scarcity, they stood shoulder to shoulder sharing resources and supporting one another.

The land itself had become a character deeply woven into the fabric of their identity. The ground upon which they had tread, frozen and unyielding, had imprinted itself upon the soles of their feet. Its majestic landscapes had inspired reverence, Its spawning beauty a testament to nature's splendor.

The endless icy plains, vast but wild, whispered tales of resilience and survival. It became clear to Thorald and tribe elders that a new path must be forged, as there are stringent limits on the resources of Svalrfold.

Their farewell to Svalrfold was bittersweet. They took one last look at towering peaks and bid farewell to familiar valleys and icy rivers. Each step away filled their hearts with sadness and excitement, it was an act of surrender and courage, a letting go of the familiar to embrace unknown.

Svalrfold would forever hold a place in their souls, and so with their eyes fixed forward they sail into the unknown.

Journey Begins

Thorald's gaze shifted towards his crew, and he felt a sense of pride swell within him. They were a diverse group, hailing from different clans and families, united by their shared vision and the audacity to embark on this journey. Some were seasoned seafarers, others were young warriors, eager to prove themselves in the face of adversity. And then there were the families, the children and the elders, who had entrusted their lives to Thorald's leadership.

He knew that their journey would be long and arduous, fraught with danger and uncertainty, the vastness of the sea was both awe-inspiring and terrifying, a reminder of the immense power and unpredictability of nature. They had left behind the familiarity of their homeland, venturing into uncharted waters where anything could happen.

But Thoraald was undaunted by the challenges that lay ahead. He spent years preparing for this journey, studying the stars, the wind, and the currents, learning the way of the sea. He had also assembled a team of skilled navigators and seafarers, each with their own unique skills.

As they sailed further into unknown, Thorald's mind drifted toward the future. He envisioned a new land, a place where his people could thrive and build a better life. He imagined vast fields of crops, lush forests teeming with game, and rivers filled with fish.

He saw homes built from the land itself, strong and sturdy, providing shelter and warmth for his people. He envisioned a community where every member had a role to play, where the collective strength of their people was greater than the sum of their parts. But he knew that this vision would require hard work and sacrifice, they would need to work together to overcome the challenges that lay ahead. They would need to be resilient, adaptive, and resourceful, harnessing the power of their collective knowledge and experience. And they would need to be brave, facing the unknown with courage and determination.

Trials of the Path

As days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, Thorald and his tribe sailed further. The monotony of the journey weighed heavily on their spirits, and the constant motion of the ships left them feeling weary and homesick. Thorald himself was not immune to these feelings, and he often found himself gazing out at the endless expanse of the sea, wondering if they would ever reach their destination.

The days blurred together, punctuated only by the occasional storm. The sea was both beautiful and treacherous, and they encountered all manners of creatures, from schools of shimmering fish to massive whales breaching the surface. It was a reminder of the vastness of the world and fragility of life.

Despite the challenges, Thorald remained steadfast in his determination to lead his people to a better future. He spent long hours in his cabin, pouring over maps and charts, plotting their course and calculating their progress. He consulted with his most trusted advisers, seeking their counsel on matters of navigation and strategy.

But as the days wore on, Thorald began to feel a sense of doubt creeping in, what if they never found the land they sought, what if they were lost at sea forever, doomed to wander the endless expanse of waters. The weight of responsibility felt heavier with each passing day, and Thorald found himself struggling to maintain his composure.

It was during on such moment of doubt that Thorald had a chance to encounter with one of the tribe's youngest member. The child, no more than six years old, had been sitting alone on the deck, staring out at the sea. Thorald approached her to offer words of comfort, but the child beat him to it, "Are we lost Thorald?" the child asked, her voice small but steady. Thorald hesitated, unsure how to respond. He had never been one to hide the truth from his people, but he also didn't want to cause unnecessary panic. "We are on a journey child", Thorald said at last "And like all journeys, there are moments of uncertainty and doubt but we are not lost, we have a destination, and we are making progress towards it every day". The child looked up at Thorald and said "I'm not scared, I trust you Thorald, you'll get us there".

Those words reminded Thorald of the trust and faith that his people placed in him. And so

with renewed Determination he continued his journey.

Welcome Gift

As they sailed further into the unknown, the air grew warmer, and the sea grew calmer. The sky was a brilliant blue, and the sun beamed down upon them, casting a golden glow across the deck. Thorald and his tribe shed their heavy furs and layers of clothing, feeling the warmth of the sun on their skin for the first time in months.

The change in climate was a welcome relief, lifting their spirits and renewing their sense of purpose. They had been traveling for so long, battling the challenges of the sea and the elements, that warm sun felt like a gift from the gods. It was a reminder that they were moving forward, that they were making progress towards their destination.

Thorald and his people relied on the wisdom passed down from their ancestors to navigate these new waters. Thorald himself had always been fascinated by the idea of exploring unknown, of pushing past the boundaries of what was known and forging a new path.

As they sailed, Thorald and his tribe encountered new wonders and challenges. They saw land dotted across the horizon, lush and green, teeming with wildlife. As they started sailing towards the new land that awaited them, Thorald and his tribe felt a sense of excitement and anticipation building within them. They knew that the road ahead would not be easy, but they were ready to face whatever challenges lay ahead.

And with every passing day, they drew closer to the land that they had dreamed of for so long, a place where they could build a better life and fulfill their dreams.

Echoes of Arrival

Thorald labored under dark cloudy sky, fixing the broken fishing boats. The Seer's calm voice reached his ears.

"Thorald", she called, her tone was whisper of soothing wind. He approached, sensing emergency in her summons.

"The stars speak of a journey", The seer began.

"A land of warmth awaits, but with it, trials that will test your very soul", she said with a grave tone, "This future holds both promise and peril".

As her words faded, Thorald felt a chill, a blend of anticipation and dread. "What journey?" he asked, his voice filled with questions. But the seer had already turned away, leaving Thorald alone with his thoughts.

Thorald stood in silent contemplation, the Seer's words echoing in his mind. Suddenly, a furious wind roared through the ship, tugging at his clothes and snapping him back to present. The journey to this uncharted territory had been long and treacherous, but now they were finally arriving at their destination. The Seer's prophecy about finding a new land full of untold riches and opportunities seemed to be coming true. Thorald had gathered his advisors and captains to discuss their strategy as they approached the

shore. They were first humans to set foot on this unexplored territory, and they encountered no other human settlements or tribes. The land was vast and rugged, with towering mountains, dense forests, and rushing rivers. However, they knew that the area was home to strange creatures and dangerous beasts, so they proceeded with caution. Thorald called a meeting of his advisors and tribe elders to discuss their strategy. They decided to send out a scouting party to explore the surrounding area, and the party reported back their findings.

The scouting party had encountered all manners of creatures, both friendly and hostile. They discovered a rich abundance of natural resources, including fertile land for farming, forests for timber, and streams for fishing. The land was teeming with wildlife, including deer, elk, and wild boar. Which would provide a valuable source of food for them. However, they also encountered fierce predators such as wolves, bears and strange beasts with four eyes and four arms that they became known as trolls, which would pose a threat to their safety.

Thorald and his advisors weighed the risks and opportunities of this new land and decided to move forward with establishing a settlement. They chose a location that was sheltered from

the elements and had access to fresh water and fertile land. They worked tirelessly to build their settlement, using their skills and ingenuity to construct homes, farm, and workshops.

Foundations of Hope

After weeks of hardwork for building settlement, Thorald decided to gather a hunting party to go for a hunt. He picked his hunting gear and vacated the camp which he built it for him self with the help of others.

As he was moving away from his camp with the hunting party, he spotted a young woman looking at flowers alone in the wilds, when Thorald approached her, she caught his eyes. Her amber eyes were like a butterflies gorgeous wings and her brown hair was as soft as bunny's fur and as straight as a pin, and her smile was like a summer morn.

It was like a billion butterflies were rushing through Thorald's body, he couldn't stop looking at her, in his mind she was too good to be true, so Thorald closed his eyes for few seconds and opened again, she was still there looking at him, she asked him if he is alright.

"I.....I.....ummm" Thorald murmured .

"I didn't catch that" she answered.

Thorald took a moment to gather his thoughts, brushing off the awkwardness that had momentarily overtaken him. "I'm... alright," he managed, his voice steadier now. He gestured to the assortment of flowers in her hands. "Are you gathering those for a purpose?" and she said she is looking for ingredients to make medicine and she explained to Thorald that she is a herbalist.

"Impressive," Thorald replied, genuine admiration coloring his tone. He found himself wanting to prolong the conversation, to know more about this woman whose presence seemed to calm the chaos of his journey. "Do you live near here?"

"Not far," she answered, brushing a strand of hair from her face. "Me and my family built a manor in the settlement. What brings you to these parts?"

Thorald hesitated, then offered a small smile. "A search for hope," he said. "And perhaps, for people as extraordinary as you."

"Uhh.....may I ask you what is your name?" Thorald continued.

She replied with a soft smile "You shouldn't ask a lady her name."

"I... I though....., I'm sorry if I offended you." he stammered.

"it's alright, my name is Valeriana."

While they talked, Thorald seized the opportunity and invited her to the camp. She refused at first, but Thorald was stubborn. After his constant asking, she was finally persuaded to go with him.

Thorald and Valeriana returned to the camp. Thorald asked "It's strange name you've got. I never heard name like that before."

She answered "my clan has more diverse names than other clans."

Thorald replied, his eyes fixed on her "It's beautiful."

Valeriana couldn't help but notice Thorald's demeanor. His eyes held a glimmer of affection that she hadn't seen before.

With a mix of nervousness and courage, she got up, she knew she had to confront him about her suspicions. Inside the tent, the air was thick with tension. Valeriana took a deep breath and

gently spoke "I know why you invited me here Thorald."

Thorald's pulse quickened as he met Valeriana's steady gaze. The words hovered on his lips, hesitant yet insistent. Finally, he spoke, his voice low and earnest. "Valeriana... I don't know how to say this without sounding like a fool, but you've become more to me than I ever thought possible."

She tilted her head, a teasing smile playing on her lips. "More than just a stubborn leader dragging me into his camp?"

Thorald chuckled softly then replied "Oh Valeriana, you have conquered my heart in a ways fiercest battle never could."

With those words Valeriana removed her long gown, then took off her tunic and approached him, Thorald was both shocked and excited so he removed his breeches and pants and they embraced each other hand in hand. After this, together they were ready to face whatever challenges lay ahead.

Attack at Dawn

Days gone by since Thorald and Valeriana had shared their intimate moment, as they neared the completion of their lodge, a sudden news disturbed their peaceful settlement. Scouts came rushing towards them, their faces etched with fear. The news they brought was severe—a pack of human like beasts, with four eyes and body covered in rugged fur, were closing in on their settlement. Their teeth, sharp as daggers, hinted at the destruction they can cause.

In that moment, Thorald's face became pale and his heart started pounding. He asked Valeriana to hide, Valeriana pale and scared shouted "I'm not leaving you!" Thorald uttered "There is no time to debate go and hide, now!" then Thorald ran into middle of the newborn settlement and left Valeriana with her tears.

He started rallying every able man and woman and asked them to take whatever they could use to fight the trolls off. Thorald ordered everyone to form a line in front of the half-built walls. Their only goal was to protect the settlement, no matter the cost.

"We.....we.....we are going to die!" a young warrior shouted, his voice trembling with fear.

"Fear not young warrior," Thorald barked "In the face of danger, we find our true strength. We stand united to face whatever comes our way, together we shall overcome these beasts. Trust in your weapon and in your might, we are survivors, we are explorers and we will not fail, not now. Now, let us face our destiny with courage."

Thorald's words resonated deeply within each person, stirring a newfound determination. Inspired by his words, the warriors stood tall. Fear was replaced with a fierce courage to protect their settlement at any cost. The ground trembled beneath their feet as the beasts approached, their guttural growls sending shivers through even the bravest hearts. Thorald raised his sword, the blade gleaming in the faint light. "Hold steady!"

The beasts were approaching fast, so Thorald had to think quickly. "How many of them are there?", Thorald asked the scout. He responded with a shaking voice, "N-n-nine sir." An unusual smile came to Thorald's face after hearing what scout said. As the beasts drew near, their menacing presence casting a shadow over the land, Thorald's heart beat fast. With a commanding voice he rallies his people, urging them to form a defensive formation in the shape

of a circular arc. They are unified by their trust in their leader.

The air crackles with anticipation as the beasts approach. Sensing the coming moment, Thorald issues a calculated order, and the circular arc shifts, reversing its direction. The warriors, guided by their leader's strategic brilliance, encircle the creatures, trapping them within their grasp.

A symphony of battle cries echoed through the battlefield as the warriors engaged in a fierce struggle against their formidable opponents. Thorald led the charge, his every strike inspiring fellow warriors, igniting a fire within their hearts. They started to push the beasts back, and the circular arc strategy proved to be a stroke of genius, allowing them to have a strategic superiority over their foes.

As the battle raged on, the circular arc tightened its grip around the beasts, leaving them no room. They finally killed all the beasts.

The Aftermath

As the settlers overcame the beasts and became victorious, a feeling of joy and relief spread through the settlement. They gathered together and started celebrating their victory. While celebrating, all eyes turned to Thorald, the leader who had guided them in everything. Thorald stood tall and proud as the settlers admired him for his guidance and bravery and they expressed their gratitude.

While celebrating, Valeriana approached Thorald, her eyes full of relief and concern. She embraced him, revealing her worry for his safety during the battle. With a gentle smile, Thorald reassured her that he was unharmed. In that moment, they found peace in each other's arms.

The settlers were drinking beer, singing, telling jokes and laughing, they were happy for the newfound sense of hope and security. They knew that new challenges would arise, but with Thorald's guidance, they were confident they could overcome anything.

Veil of Sorrow

After three years of settling in the new land, the brave settlers decided to name their new town "Avalora". During these warm days, Thorald dedicated his times to tending to the fertile crops, while his beloved wife, Valeriana, carried their unborn child.

One day, as Thorald was busy in the farming field, he was startled by the fierce scream of his wife, so he rushed to her side. "Maiden! What's the matter?" Thorald Stammered.

"Sir, your wife has been experiencing strange pains in her womb, and this morning she began cold sweating. It's unlike anything we've seen before." The maiden cried out.

"Then fetch the shaman!" Thorald commanded.

The shaman arrived swiftly and started examining Valeriana. It was unlike anything he had encountered before. After the examination he turned to Thorald and said, "I can make a potion to ease her pain but I can't guarantee her or the child's health, but I need some ingredients which I don't have, Moonflower Petals, Starroot, Silver Lotus. I'll take care of the tea and boiled water for the potion."

Being scared, he mounted his horse accompanied by a trusted companion. He embarked on a quest to gather the ingredients and make this herbal potion that could bring relief to Valeriana.

Thorald was very determined to save his wife and unborn child. He encountered all manner of wild animals and creatures, but with the help of his companion, he overcame these dangers.

A few days has passed since leaving Avalora, and although Thorald found few ingredients, Valeriana's condition had worsened. While they were searching, they spotted a big mountain which was smoking, unlike anything Thorald had ever seen in Svalrfold. As Thorald and his companion Grind drew closer to this mountain, they stumble upon a mysterious sight. Stone structures with golden veins dotted the landscape, some reaching as tall as mountains. This ancient city was in ruins, a reminder of the harshness of the world.

As Thorald explored the remnants of this lost civilization, his shock turned into terror as they came face to face with skeleton figures wielding swords and shields with glowing red eyes. Without hesitation, Thorald and Grind engage in a fierce battle against the skeletons. However,

for every skeleton they slay, two more rose to take its place, intensifying the battle.

In the middle of a fierce battle against hordes of skeletons, Thorald and Grind showed remarkable prowess, battling with hundreds of skeletons. Suddenly, the skeletons ceased their relentless assault, and the sound of approaching footsteps filled the air.

Emerging from the shadows, a man with gray hair, pale skin, and adorned in a black and red robe. With an air of authority, he asked them about their identities and the reason for their intrusion into his hideout.

"I'm a desperate man who is looking for a way to cure his wife" answered Thorlad, exhaustion etched all over his face.

Mysterious man with a cold face answered "I know you, Thorald. Your plight has reached my ears. I am Ardax, a magician from centuries past. My kind were powerful mages who ruled these parts for thousands of years."

"What happened to your people?" Thorald replied."

"We used magic for healing, creation, and battles. However, our excessive use of dark

magic awakened the volcano and led the destruction of my kind." Ardax explained.

"This means you can do anything with magic, so you can save my wife!" Thorald shouted.

Ardax cautioned Thorald, his voice a mixture of sympathy and cold calculation. "The magic you seek is not without cost. It requires a powerful source, one that is both rare and irreplaceable."

Thorald stepped closer, his voice unwavering "Name it. There is nothing I won't do for Valeriana."

"Your soul. It is the only source strong enough to fuel this magic."

The room seemed to hold its breath as Thorald absorbed the weight of the demand. Memories of Valeriana's laughter, her gentle touch, and the promise of their unborn child flashed through his mind. Grind's voice cut through his thoughts, trembling with urgency. "Thorald, this is madness! There has to be another way!"

Thorald shook his "I won't stand idle as she suffers. If my soul can save my beloved and my child, then so be it." He turned to Ardax and said ""Do it. But let Grind return to tell my people why I've made this choice."

Ardax performed his magic and as Thorald's soul departed his body, he felt no pain, instead he found solace in the memories of his beloved lover. Then his body was raised as a servant to Ardax.

Days later, Grind arrived in Avalora. By the time Grind arrived in Avalora, Valeriana was already on her feet. The magic Thorald had bartered his soul for had done its work swiftly, erasing the sickness that had once gripped her body. She stood outside her tent, her skin glowing with restored vitality, her eyes scanning the horizon for her husband's return.

When Grind dismounted, his face ashen and his movements heavy with grief, Valeriana rushed to him. "Where is Thorald?" she demanded, the hope in her voice sharp enough to cut through the air.

Grind answered while his hands trembling "Valeriana! He.....he saved you, the magic worked! But the cost....." His words broke as he couldn't meet Valeriana's gaze.

"Tell me." She whispered, "Where is he?"

"He made a deal, his soul....., It was the price to cast the spell."

Valeriana staggered back, her hand clutching at her chest as if she could physically hold the pieces of her breaking heart together. Her knees gave way, and she crumpled to the ground, her cries tearing through the quiet of the settlement.

"He... he's gone?" she gasped, her voice raw and trembling. "He sacrificed himself for me?" Then she looked at her womb "For us?"

Grind nodded, tears streaming down his face. "He wanted you to live. To carry on his dream and his legacy. But he knew... he knew the price."

Valeriana's screams filled the air, a sound so raw and visceral it brought settlers rushing to the scene. Her grief consumed her, a tidal wave of loss and despair that swept through the camp, leaving no heart untouched. Though her body was whole, her soul bore the scars of Thorald's absence, and it would take far more than time to heal the void he had left behind.

The settlers mourned alongside her, their own sorrow mingling with hers. They had lost their leader, their protector, but they vowed to honor his sacrifice by building the future he had dreamed of. Valeriana, though shattered,

resolved to carry on for their child and the legacy Thorald had entrusted to her.

Settlers worked tirelessly to expand the settlement, crafting Thorald's legacy into every structure they built. Children were taught the story of his bravery, and songs were written in his honor. Valeriana, though heartbroken, found solace in tending the crops Thorald had once planted, ensuring that life would flourish in the land he had saved.

Thorald's legacy as a leader and loyal lover would forever be etched in the hearts of the people, ensuring he would never be forgotten.

Eternal Echoes

As we reached to the final pages of this tale, we tell farewell to the characters who have become our companions throughout this story. Their journey had unfolded with triumphs and challenged. With each chapter we have witnessed their growth, their resilience and their love. Now as we close this book, we carry their memories with us and their legacy lives on, reminding us the power of imagination and writing.

Valeriana:

"A healer with a heart
as strong as her remedies,
carrying Thorald's
legacy within her."



Thorald:

“A leader who gave
everything for his
people”



Amirrezq

Grind:

"A loyal companion,
savage in battle
and unyielding
in friendship."



Avalora:

“The sanctuary

of dreams

and sacrifice.”





**LEAVING THEIR FROZEN HOMELAND, THORALD
AND HIS TRIBE DISCOVER THE HARSH BUT
PROMISING LAND OF KYNLIGRLAND. AS THEY
STRIVE TO SURVIVE, THORALD'S WIFE BECAME
SICK, SO HE SETS OFF A JOURNEY TO FIND A
CURE.**

**AND HE UNCOVERS SECRETS OF THIS LAND
WHILE HE IS DESPERETLY SEARCHING CURE
AND REMEDY FOR HIS WIFE.**

